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**State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$75,000 for Barren County High School Agriculture Department Livestock Education Facility**

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board voted today to approve a \$75,000 grant request submitted by the Barren County High School Agriculture Department to establish a variety of agricultural education efforts. The award will enable the high school agriculture program to establish a Large and Specialty Animal Agriculture Laboratory in the state's top tobacco producing county. The application was reviewed by the Barren County Agricultural Development Council and forwarded to the state board as a high priority item. Funds come from \$1,116,160 set aside for Barren County in the Agricultural Development Fund established with half of Kentucky's tobacco settlement proceeds.

Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of Barren County young people interested in agriculture.

"This action means that the young people of Barren County will have expanded opportunities to learn about career options in agriculture other than tobacco. This is an investment in the future of Kentucky agriculture, the future of our rural communities, and in diversification efforts in one of our state's most progressive agricultural counties," said Governor Paul Patton. "The fact that this investment is being made in livestock instruction in our state's top tobacco producing county means that Kentucky agriculture is looking for diversification opportunities."

The award was made as one of eleven projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$4,443,000 in state level projects, and \$403,600 in a variety of county-level programs, including the Barren County High School Agriculture Department Livestock Education Facility.

"I know from experience the importance of high school vocational agriculture programs to young people," Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith said. "This Large and Specialty Animal Agriculture Laboratory will be a useful tool in educating students about Kentucky's livestock industry and the many opportunities in that industry."

"We are glad to receive this money, as it will be spent educating young people," Barren County High School Agriculture teacher Chris Schalk said. "Due to the dependence on tobacco in our county, we have to educate our youth so that they will be able to find alternatives in agriculture, as well do a more efficient job with what we are already doing."